



County of Augusta  
Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee)  
PO Box 590  
Verona, VA 24482

Thursday, October 24, 2024 7:00 pm

## MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Mr. Powell, Middle River District  
Mr. Dana, Beverly Manor District  
Ms. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator  
Ms. Melton, Asst. Superintendent for Instruction & Technology

**ABSENT:** Ms. Thornton, North River District  
Mr. Ingram, Wayne District  
Mr. Barley, South River District  
Vacant, Riverheads District  
Vacant, Pastures District

VIRGINIA: At the regular meeting of the Augusta County Internet Initiative (Broadband Committee) held on Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

### Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:00 pm.

### Adoption of the Minutes

Minutes of the October 26, 2023, January 25, 2024 and April 25, 2024 meetings were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

### Comments by the Public

None

### Matters to be Presented by Staff

Introductions were made to Mr. Dana, the new Committee representative for the Beverley Manor District. Ms. Whetzel provided background on broadband efforts in Augusta County over the years, including funding and changes in speed requirements and mapping tools.

Ms. Whetzel provided an update on the VATI 2021 grant by MGW/Lingo Networks. All four project areas have been completed. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development will be conducting a Final Financial Review in January for which MGW and the County will provide records. The grant draw for the retainage (final) payment was approved.

- McDowell (MGW) – Remaining pole attachment permits obtained and power make-ready completed allowing for FTTH to be available to all addresses in this project area upon request; FTTH connections continued in areas where fiber is available, which in this area is primarily upgrading existing subscribers from DSL or phone-only service to fiber.
- Deerfield (MGW) – Broadband access is now available to 100% of the Deerfield Project area; Installation of FTTH continued in areas where fiber is available, which in this area is primarily upgrading existing subscribers from DSL or phone-only service to fiber.
- Middlebrook (LN) – Project Area is at 100% completion; FTTH installs continue in areas where fiber is available.
- Morris Mill (LN) – Pole attachment permits obtained and/or fiber construction completed; FTTH installs continue in areas where service is available.

All of the milestones have been completed to date.

Below is a summary of the project:

Project Area	Total Passings	Passings to Date 6/30/2024
McDowell	235	235 MGW Project
Deerfield	508	508 MGW Project
Morris Mill	288	288 Lingo Project
Middlebrook	142	142 Lingo Project
Total	1173	1173
% Completed		100%
Subscribers to date		391 (33%)

Total Project Budget: \$1,814,876

Spent to Date \$1,814,876

Grant to Date \$1,270,413

Locality Funds to Date \$216,942

Provider Funds to Date \$327,521

Ms. Whetzel updated the Committee on the status of the VATI2022 project. The preconstruction milestone has been achieved and the first remittance was paid in March 2024. APB has collected field data on approximately 36,000 poles, submitted 21,400 pole attachment requests. While approximately 4200 Notice to Proceeds (NTPs) have been received on Dominion poles, APB needs significantly more NTPs to reach a large queue of constructible fiber miles. Dominion middle mile fiber construction has begun in Augusta and Fauquier. APB plans to begin last mile construction in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in Augusta, depending on pole attachment approvals. Make ready construction costs are exceeding budgeted amounts, so APB intends to pursue additional funding through the Virginia Make Ready Initiative program and other measures during 2024 Q4. APB expects to update timeline during 4Q2024 depending based on make-ready throughout the project area.

	Expenditures	Grant	Counties	Provider
Region:				
To date	\$64,698,479	\$25,897,068	\$12,870,875	\$25,930,536
Award	303,116,817	96,873,500	62,450,000	143,793,317
Augusta:				
To-date			1,751,615	
Match			8,400,000	
Interest Earned			320,942	

Augusta has made 9 of 9 payments to Commission to date.

Commission and DHCD are withholding 10% retainage per VATI contract requirements.

DHCD offered providers the opportunity to rescope VATI2022 projects to make portions of the project eligible for BEAD funding. All Points rescoped approximately 900 passings to be eligible for BEAD.

NTIA has approved the next phase report for Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program submitted by the State for review. The process for BEAD funding opened up on October 1 for providers to send a letter of intent and the application process will start December 1. Most of the providers in the County have expressed interest in applying for BEAD funding for projects in Augusta

County. If the County provides letters of support to a provider, the provider can earn additional points on their application. Applications are submitted based on Zip Code Tabulation Areas.

DHCD is offering a Virginia Broadband Affordability and Adoption Planning Grant Program grant to conduct a needs assessment, identify priorities, and develop plans with implementation strategies to address and promote digital opportunity in their communities. Ms. Whetzel will reach out to DHCD to learn more about the grant process and bring information back to the next meeting.

**Matters to be Presented by the Committee**

None

**Adjournment**

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 23, 2025. With no further discussion by the committee, the meeting adjourned.